

Sept 18, 1947

Ladies and Gentlemen:-

The members of the graduating class are honored in being called to the Bar of Ontario at the same time as the Prime Minister of Canada and in having him address you. While not a lawyer by profession he has become possessed of extensive knowledge in various branches of law, such as constitutional law and labour law. He received the degree of Bachelor of Laws from the University of Toronto in 1896. He was later a fellow in Political Economy of the University of Chicago and in Political Science of Harvard University; he has received many times the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, the first being from Queen's University in 1919; he is a Doctor of Civil Law of Oxford University and is an Honorary Bencher of Gray's Inn. With all his accumulation of honours he was not made a barrister until today and now he increases the already large number of barristers in his Cabinet.

I would have the members of the graduating class observe that the present eminence of the Prime Minister was not attained by sudden flight. He has been an indefatigable worker. Following his extensive academic preparation he was engaged in many public enquiries and served on many public commissions, the mere enumeration of which would take more time than we have at our disposal. He has had 31 years' service in the House of Commons and no member of the present House has had longer service. He became Prime Minister of Canada at the early age of 47 years and has occupied that distinguished position for over 20 years.

This length of tenure has not been surpassed in Canada, the nearest approach being the premiership of Sir John Macdonald. Sir Robert Walpole was Prime Minister of Great Britain for over 21 years and his record will be surpassed by Mr. King if he is spared until May of next year.

The members of the graduating class have had today the privilege of being present at the election of an Honorary Benchers and there have been only four such elections in the 150 years of the existence of the Law Society of Upper Canada. In 1847 the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine was admitted as a member of the Society and signed the record but apparently was not made an Honorary Benchers. In 1880 the honour was conferred upon His Majesty King Edward the VII when Prince of Wales; in 1919 upon His Majesty King Edward the VIII when Prince of Wales and in 1936 upon His Excellency Lord Tweedsmuir. While the Benchers of the Society have no political affiliations as such, they felt that this honour should be extended to mark the long tenure of office of the Prime Minister, who will be described by future historians as one of the greatest sons of Canada, and were pleased that it should be conferred upon the son of a member of the Society who had a close association with the Society and its law school for many years.

The Prime Minister has been associated with Osgoode Hall in<sup>a</sup> particular and peculiar manner. In 1837 his grandfather, William Lyon Mackenzie, Leader of the Rebellion of that year, was leading an attack upon Toronto and it had been arranged that his force should advance in two bodies, one to come down Avenue Road under his own leadership and the other to come down



Yonge Street under the leadership of Samuel Lount. They were to meet at Osgoode Hall. There was an unusual situation at the Hall. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, had a musket in his hand, another leaning against his chest and a brace of pistols in his belt. Chief Justice Robinson, Justices Macaulay, Jones and McLean and the Attorney-General and Solicitor General with muskets, cartridge boxes and bayonets were standing in the ranks as private soldiers. The two leaders did not meet at Osgoode Hall but representatives of their families meet here today. The Prime Minister meets Mr. Stanley Lount Springsteen, one of our Benchers who is a great-grandson of Samuel Lount's brother. In 1837 the Judges would have met Mr. King's ancestor~~s~~ in warlike array. Today after this ceremony the Prime Minister will be sworn as a Barrister before the Chief Justice of Ontario, who, with his fellow-Judges, will extend a warm greeting to the new Barrister.

Mr. John King, M.A., K.C., the father of the Prime Minister, was graduated from the University of Toronto in 1865, was called to the Bar in 1869 and was made King's Counsel in 1890. He was a member of the Senate of the University of Toronto from 1879 until his death on August 30, 1916. He was appointed King's Counsel both by the Liberal Government of Sir Oliver Mowat and by the Conservative Government of Sir John Thompson. He was a lecturer for 21 years at Osgoode Hall Law School, his subjects being criminal law and evidence. He wrote many articles on legal subjects and several books, the most important being the Law of Criminal Libel and the Law of

Defamation in Canada. I was one of his students and I remember him as being a careful and conscientious lecturer and a kindly and genial man. In 1872 he married Isabel Grace, the youngest daughter of William Lyon Mackenzie.

He was a son of John King who commanded a detachment of the Royal Force Artillery in 1837 and thus it came about that the Leader of the Rebellion, William Lyon Mackenzie, and an officer in the opposing forces, John King, should have a grandson in common who was to become Prime Minister of Canada and who now, 110 years later, will address you.